

REMARKS

This is in response to an Office Action that was mailed on July 23, 2008. Claims 1-8, 10, and 20-28 were pending in that action. All claims were rejected. With the present response, claims 1, 20, and 26 are amended. Claims 4, 5, 22, 23 and 27 are cancelled. The remaining claims are unchanged.

Beginning on page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 6-8, 10 and 20-28 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2005/0027691 (attributed to Brin) in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0097252 (attributed to Mackie). Beginning on page 10 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 4 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Brin and Mackie references in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0088547 (attributed to Hammond). For reasons that will be explained in detail below, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims, at least as amended, are patentable distinguishable from the cited references considered individually or in combination.

The only reference of record that supports concatenation is the Mackie reference. Within the Mackie reference, the only statement having anything to do with a rationale for concatenation is a brief assertion in the background material that some spoken languages are known to produce natural language inputs that include concatenated words. There is nothing in the Mackie reference that proposes concatenation for any purpose related to query processing. So, it is apparently true that some spoken languages, such as German, will include concatenation of individual words. In what way does this make it obvious to concatenate search terms in a query processing context? The Examiner has not provided a good answer to this question. In fact, it is apparent that the Examiner does not know how to respond to the awkwardness of the circumstances. The Examiner says “one would have been motivated to do so in order to provide an active and efficient way of creating new words, since storing all meaningful compounds in a dictionary-base is, quite simply, impossible.” This logic is flawed. The statement noted by the Examiner supports a motivation to undo concatenation, which is the focus of the Mackie reference. Applicant’s claims have to do with utilization of concatenation to create as many new words as possible, which certainly would not reduce the size of a dictionary base. For at least this reason, and in light of the fact that all of the

pending rejections rely on the proposed Mackie-Brin combination, it is respectfully submitted that all claims are in condition for allowance.

In the spirit of cooperation, with the present response, Applicant has moved additional dependent claim features into each independent claim. It is respectfully submitted that these proposed amendments are totally appropriate for entry after final rejection. All of the proposed issues have already been considered by the Examiner. Consideration and entry of the amendments are respectfully solicited.

Independent claim 1 has been amended such that it now includes the features of former dependent claims 4 and 5, which have now been cancelled. Applicant rejected the elements of claims 4 and 5 based on an additional reference, namely the Hammond reference. The elements of claims 4 and 5 involve preprocessing an input string so as to remove at least one extraneous character. The link between the Mackie and Hammond references is no better than the link between the Mackie and Brin references. For at this reason, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable in its present form.

Independent claim 20 has been amended such that it now includes the features of former dependent claims 22 and 23, which have now been cancelled. Accordingly, independent claim 20 now requires certain prerequisites of the additional search terms. Notably, the Mackie reference does not teach or suggest concatenating based on a desire to provide accurate search results. The only concatenation proposed in the Mackie reference is based on a desire for proper grammar or other linguistic restraints. It is a benefit of Applicant's invention to concatenate in order to provide accurate search results. There is absolutely no suggestion in the cited references that concatenation should be done for such a purpose. Thus, the Examiner's cited motivation is not supported in the art. The cited prior art fails to teach or suggest maximizing combinations of words through concatenation as claimed. For at least this reason, independent claim 20 is in allowable form.

With the present response, independent claim 26 has been amended in a manner similar to independent claim 20. For reasons similar to those described above in relation to independent claim 20, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 26 is in allowable form.

The dependent claims in the present case are all dependent upon an independent claim

believed to be allowable for reasons discussed above. For at least the same reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable in their present form.

In summary, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-3, 6-8, 10, 20, 21, 24-26 and 28 are in condition for allowance. Consideration and favorable action are respectfully solicited. The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

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